

Papua New Guinea

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under age 15 in Papua New Guinea are unavailable.³⁶⁶⁸ Children work as domestic servants,³⁶⁶⁹ in subsistence agriculture, and in family-related businesses.³⁶⁷⁰ It has been reported that children work in the commercial agriculture sector, including on tea and coffee farms.³⁶⁷¹ Children are also exploited in prostitution.³⁶⁷²

Education is not compulsory or free in Papua New Guinea.³⁶⁷³ In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 75 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 74 percent.³⁶⁷⁴ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Recent primary school attendance statistics are not available for Papua New Guinea. As of 2001, 69 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade five.³⁶⁷⁵ In rural areas, the lack of access to schools reportedly contributes to low enrollment.³⁶⁷⁶

³⁶⁶⁸ This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section of this report for information about sources used. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section.

³⁶⁶⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted By States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention, Concluding Observations: Papua New Guinea*, CRC/C/15/Add.229, February 26, 2004, para. 57.

³⁶⁷⁰ U. S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004: Papua New Guinea*, Washington, D.C., February 28, 2005; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41656.htm>.

³⁶⁷¹ Pacific Islands Report, *Child Labor Claimed at PNG Highlands Tea and Coffee Plantations*, Post-Courier/PINA Nius Online, [online] 2000 [cited August 9, 2005]; available from <http://166.122.164.43/archive/2000/March/03-23-14.htm>.

³⁶⁷² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports: Papua New Guinea*, para. 59. See also ECPAT International, *Papua New Guinea*, ECPAT, [database online] 2003 [cited August 8, 2005]; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/index.asp. The commercial sex sector, while still relatively undeveloped, is expanding, particularly in urban areas. See John C. Caldwell and Geetha Isaac-Toua, *AIDS in Papua New Guinea: Situation in the Pacific* (Canberra: National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health of Australian National University, 2002), 104-111. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Papua New Guinea*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6f; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27785.htm>.

³⁶⁷³ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record (Partial) of the 934th Meeting: Papua New Guinea*, CRC/C/SR.934, January 2004, para. 4; available from <http://www.unhcr.ch>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Papua New Guinea*, Section 5.

³⁶⁷⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51> (Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios, Primary; accessed December 2005).

³⁶⁷⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=55> (School life expectancy, % of repeaters, survival rates; accessed December 2005).

³⁶⁷⁶ ADB, *Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: Relevance and Progress*, March 2003, 25; available from http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG_Pacific/mdg.pdf. Children may have to spend several hours a day walking to and from school. See also UNICEF, *Real Lives: An Identity for Joe's Booboo - Birth Registration in Papua New Guinea*, [online] October 7, 2002 [cited August 8, 2005]; available from http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/papuang_1612.html.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment Act sets the minimum age for employment at 18 years, but children ages 11 to 18 may work in family businesses with parental permission, medical clearance, and a work permit from the labor office.³⁶⁷⁷ Any work by children between the ages of 11 and 16 must not interfere with school attendance.³⁶⁷⁸

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Papua New Guinea. The Constitution prohibits forced labor.³⁶⁷⁹ The Criminal Code prohibits procuring, luring, or abducting women or girls for sexual relations or for confinement in a brothel.³⁶⁸⁰ The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and the Department of Police are responsible for implementing and enforcing child labor laws;³⁶⁸¹ however, the U.S. Department of State reports that enforcement by those departments has been poor.³⁶⁸² Children perceived as gang members, street vendors, child sex workers and boys engaged in homosexual conduct are subjected to police violence.³⁶⁸³ There is no compulsory military service in Papua New Guinea; the minimum age for voluntary military service is 16.³⁶⁸⁴

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Papua New Guinea has a “National Child Protection Service” to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children.³⁶⁸⁵ UNICEF, with the support of the government, is also implementing a child protection program that includes advocacy for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor, with a particular focus on commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, UNICEF is working to promote girls’ access to basic education through education reform activities and awareness-raising about the value of schooling.³⁶⁸⁶ The Government of Papua New Guinea is implementing education sector reforms aimed at increasing children’s access to education.³⁶⁸⁷ AusAID currently supports government reform efforts

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified ILO Convention 138	6/02/2000	✓
Ratified ILO Convention 182	6/02/2000	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

³⁶⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Papua New Guinea*, Section 6d.

³⁶⁷⁸ U. S. Embassy- Port Moresby, *reporting*, September 14, 2005.

³⁶⁷⁹ *Constitution of the Independent State of New Guinea*; available from http://www.paclii.org/pg/legis/consol_act/cotisopng534/.

³⁶⁸⁰ The section on abduction specifies that this applies to girls under the age of 18. See U. S. Embassy- Port Moresby, *reporting*.

³⁶⁸¹ *Papua New Guinea Criminal Code*, as cited in The Protection Project Legal Library, [database online]; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/PapuaNewGuineaF.pdf>.

³⁶⁸² U. S. Embassy- Port Moresby, *reporting*.

³⁶⁸³ Human Rights Watch, *Papua New Guinea: Epidemic of Police Brutality Against Children*, press release, Port Moresby, September 1, 2005; available from http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/08/31/png11659_txt.htm.

³⁶⁸⁴ ECPAT International, *Papua New Guinea*. http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=874.

³⁶⁸⁵ See also Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*, para. 59; available from http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=838.

³⁶⁸⁶ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports: Papua New Guinea*.

³⁶⁸⁷ UNICEF, *At A Glance: Papua New Guinea*, [online] 2004 [cited May 28, 2004]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/papuang.html>.

through basic education projects that aim to improve teacher training, build and renovate classrooms, provide equipment and textbooks, and promote teaching in local languages.³⁶⁸⁸

³⁶⁸⁸ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Press Document: Committee on Rights of the Child Considers Initial Report of Papua New Guinea*, [online] 2004 [cited February 10, 2004], 17, 19; available from <http://www.unog.ch/news2/documents/newsen/crc04009e.htm>. See also Australian Agency for International Development, *Australia and Papua New Guinea: Development Cooperation Program 2000-2003*, 2004; available from http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/australia_png.pdf.